

PRAYING IS LIFE

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. (Lk.18:1)



The most important thing in life is our relationship with God, and the most important means of nurturing that relationship is daily prayer.

Therefore, let us distinguish between *saying prayers* and being a *people of prayer*. It is like the difference between the man who has an attraction for a beautiful girl and the man who commits himself to marrying the beautiful girl. And so it is with our life of prayer. Because we believe in God we are attracted to him, therefore it seems natural that we are attracted to saying prayers. However, at some point in our lives, we must make a commitment to experiencing a life of prayer.

Why should we pray? First, we should **not** pray to feel good. Though we may feel good when we pray, this is not the primary reason for prayer. Prayer is primarily for the nurturing of our personal relationship with God. Indeed, like any relationship, if it is experienced only for “how I feel” such a relationship becomes self-ish.

In any relationship, we must get to know the person we love and in prayer, we come to know God. Since His fullest revelation is Jesus, Christian prayer is centered on knowing, loving and serving Jesus Christ. In Jesus, God has announced to the world, “I have come that you might have life and have it in abundance.” (Jn. 10:10) Therefore, knowing, loving and serving Jesus in prayer are essential to life itself. God’s design for our life of prayer is deeper unity in a life giving and life saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Of *life giving* Jesus said; “I am the vine, you are the branches, apart from me you can do nothing.” (Jn.15:5). Of *life saving* he said; “I lay down my life for my sheep.” (Jn.10:15). And of *relationships* with us, He said; “I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.” (Jn.15:15).

It is evident from the passages above, that we need Jesus to live here on earth and go to heaven for full and eternal living. Prayer is a fundamental access to Jesus and his life. Prayer is life. Jesus should be our model and goal in prayer. And, like any relationship, we must be willing to make sacrifices to nurture our relationship of prayer with Jesus. Among the biggest of these sacrifices is one of our most important resources—time.

If you are willing to be assisted in committing your time and energy to Jesus Christ, for the sake of your life, then I invite you to continue reading . Meanwhile I leave you with a story I heard at a retreat given by Fr. Francis Martin.

“A young man came to a hermit-priest who lived in the country by a stream. The young man asked the priest to teach him the secrets of prayer. The priest asked him to go to the stream, get down on his hands and knees and look carefully into the flowing water. When the young man had assumed the advised position – face almost touching the water, the priest pushed his head under the water and held it there until the young man was completely out of breath! He let the young man lift his head and breathe with a huge gasp of agony and relief so seemingly close to never breathing again. The priest then said, ‘When you want to pray as badly as you just took that breath, come to see me for your next lesson!’ “

While there have been thousands of books written on the subject of prayer there are some basic principles will spark your prayer life. Much of my material will be rooted in a wonderful book that is no longer published, Appointment With God, Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R (Franciscan University Press). It is one of the best books I have seen for outlining and forming a life of prayer. If you can find a copy via the internet it will make a great resource for your spiritual life of prayer.

....Fr. Moe